

regarding the heretics with interest and reserved approval. He intended to protect liberty of thought in the schools, since the innovators were the bitterest enemies of the monks and friars.

During the winter of 1881-2 feeling between the parties rose higher and higher. The subject of the Peasants' Rising was in all men's mouths. The seculars, far from admitting any responsibility in Wycliffe, accused the friars of having stirred up the poor against the rich by an unscrupulous use of their religious influence.¹ A Wycliffite named Nicolas Hereford, a man of considerable position in the schools, preached against the mendicant orders on every occasion, demanded the total abolition of them, and carried with him the mass of the University. In February the friars felt his attacks to be so dangerous that they wrote to John of G-aunt requesting his protection, and denying that they had had any hand in the rebellion which had done such injury to his power and property.² But the Duke remained neutral both then and during the events which, in the next twelve months, decided the fate of Oxford.

A few days after this letter had been sent, Hereford preached a Latin sermon at St. Mary's before the learned of the University, in which he exhorted the authorities to exclude friars and monks from all degrees and honours. The regulars complained to the Chancellor Bygge, but he refused to reprimand the preacher. Indeed his two proctors had been present at the sermon and applauded it.³ It seemed that the seculars, under the new stimulus of Wycliffism, were about to make a supreme effort to rid the schools of their rivals. The feeling shown by the rest of the University so much alarmed the regulars that they decided without more delay to call in an outside power. A deputation of monks and friars was sent up to London to appeal to Archbishop Courtenay.

The council which sat at Blackfriars during the latter half of May 1382 and condemned the principal tenets of Lollardry, the famous 'council of the earthquake,' included ten bishops, and no less than sixteen doctors and bachelors of theology of the mendicant orders. It was a signal reunion

¹ *fasc. /?.*, 293-4.

« *Ibid.* 292-6.

« *Ibid.* 305.